

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4329

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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E O 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: LIKUD TOO, HAS FACTIONAL PROBLEMS

REF: TEL AVIV 6108

1. REFTEL AND OTHER RECENT EMB REPORTING HAVE HIGHLIGHTED CURRENT PROBLEMS OF, AND DANGER OF SPLITS WITHIN, BOTH LABOR PARTY AND ALIGNMENT AND NRP, PARTICULARLY RE GOI POLICY TOWARDS WEST BANK. LIKUD OF COURSE IS NOT IMMUNE FROM THIS ISRAELI POLITICAL DISEASE, AS EVIDENCED BY FOLLOWING PAIR OF ARTICLES WHICH APPEARED IN OCT 24 HAARETZ CONCERNING MK'S ARIK SHARON AND SHMUEL TAMIR, BOTH OF WHO RECENTLY COMPLETED VISITS TO US.

2. IN STORMY FREE CENTER FACTION MEETING, TAMIR REPORTEDLY DEFENDED HIS CHANGE OF HEART IN FAVOR OF TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS BY STATING "CHANCES OF PEACE ARE MINIMAL, SMALLER THAN BEFORE THE YOM KIPPUR WAR. I AM NOT TAKING ON HUSSEIN, BUT RATHER AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION, IN ORDER TO ENABLE ISRAEL TO GO ON EXISTING." HE URGED ONE FACTIN MEMBER TO GO TO THE US AND TRY TO PRESENT THE HARD-LINE POLICY OF LIKUD TO "OUR MOST DEDICATED FRIENDS IN THE SENATE." HE CLAIMED ARIK SHARON TRIED THIS AND FAILED. TAMIR DESCRIBED THE IMAGE OF LIKUD

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IN THE US AS THE MOST MILITANT FASCIST ORGANIZATION IN ISRAEL.

HE WARNED THAT LIKUD MUST FIGHT THIS IMAGE.

3. IN SUPPORT OF HIS OWN HARD-LINE POSITION AGAINST GOI CONCESSIONS AND WITHDRAWALS RE EGYPT AND JORDAN, SHARON REPORTEDLY TOLD PRESS THAT SENATOR JACKSON TOLD SHARON TO TELL RABIN "TO MAKE A DETERMINED STAND AGAINST US PROPOSALS AND PRESSURES AND RESIST ANYTHING THAT WOULD PREJUDICE THE COUNTRY'S SECURITY". ACCORDING TO SHARON, IF ANOTHER WAR BREAKS OUT JACKSON THINKS ISRAEL SHOULD ADOPT A DEFENSIVE STANCE ON THE EGYPTIAN FRONT AND AN OFFENSIVE ONE IN THE EAST. HE DOES NOT THINK IT IMPOSSIBLE THAT RUSSIAN TROOPS MIGHT PARTICIPATE ON THE SOUTHERN FRONT. JACKSON REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IN EVENT OF SOVIET INTERVENTION HE WOULD ADVOCATE FLYING TWO DIVISIONS TO GREECE. JACKSON ALLEGEDLY AGREED THAT PACE OF US WEAPON PRODUCTION WAS UNSATISFACTORY FROM VIEWPOINT OF US ALLIES (SIC) AND THAT ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE PUT UNDER PRESSURE TO INCREASE IT.

4. COMMENT: WE WOULD WELCOME ANY INFO DEPT MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE CONCERNING VISITS OF EITHER SHARON OR TAMIR TO WASHINGTON. SHORT TERM SIGNIFICANCE OF PUBLIC AIRING OF TWO DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED VIEWS BY PROMINENT LIKUDNIKS IS THAT LIKUD MAY NOT BE ABLE COUNT ON ALL OF ITS MEMBERS IN SHOWDOWN VOTE IN KNESSET OVER WEST BANK POLICY.
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